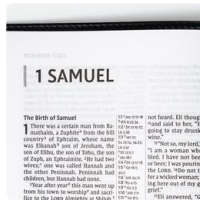


# OpenTheo

## 1 Samuel 21 - 22



### 1 Samuel - Steve Gregg

In this segment, Steve Gregg discusses the events of 1 Samuel 21-22. David seeks refuge with the priest Hymnelek in Nob, where he pretends to be on a secret mission for King Saul. He then flees to the Cave of Adullam, where he is joined by a group of followers. Saul, who sees David as a threat, orders the death of Hymnelek and his family, except for one surviving son. Despite the danger and uncertainty he faces, David maintains his faith in God and praises Him even in his times of distress.

### Transcript

Okay, we'll just pick up the story where we left off at 1 Samuel 21. David is fleeing now officially. He's fleeing from Saul.

And it's interesting that there are indications that he was not fleeing alone. But then there are indications that he was. And I'm not sure exactly how this is to be understood.

I'll bring these points up as we come to them in this chapter, but it's not entirely clear who was with him at this time. We do know that eventually, like in chapter 22, there were 400 men with him. But what number of them may have left home with him to flee with him, we don't know.

But we'll see as we read on here. Now David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech was afraid when he met David, and said to him, Why are you alone and no one with you? You see, it sounds like he's alone.

However, David might have had a small number of men with him, unarmed. And therefore he was not accompanied by armies. And it seems strange to Ahimelech that David, who usually is leading a thousand men around, only has a handful of men, perhaps.

I mean, that is a possibility. When he says no one's with you, it could be a hyperbole. You're usually with so many people in your train, and now you're traveling with only these few guys.

Whoever they might be, we don't know. But the reason I say it is, well, we'll see. I'll tell you why we say it.

Now, Nob was apparently the new location of the tabernacle, though the Ark was not there. The Ark was still in a private home, and would remain there until David became king. But the tabernacle still existed somewhere, at least some form of the tabernacle.

One tabernacle had apparently been destroyed at Shiloh by the Philistines earlier than this. But the other furniture of the tabernacle was housed, it would seem, in a building or a tent of some kind in Nob. How that location came to be selected, and what exactly was it, we know they had the table of showbread, that much we do know, and the priests were there.

And so David comes to there, actually hoping to get some food, because he's had to leave in haste, but he doesn't want the priest to know that he's running from Saul, partly probably to protect the priest, and maybe partly because he's not sure if he can count on the priest's loyalty. That's the problem. When you have the government against you, you never know who you can trust, because even people who might be sympathetic toward you might betray you, because they're afraid of repercussions that would come upon them for taking your side.

So David just keeps this whole thing a secret, that he's running from Saul. That's not been made official yet. I mean, it's not been publicized yet.

So Ahimelech is usually accustomed to seeing David at the head of armies, and here he's coming without an army. And Ahimelech is afraid. He thinks this does not bode well.

In fact, he may even be fearing that David is fleeing from Saul, since I'm sure the news had been rumored that Saul has thrown spears at David in the past, and Saul had even put out among his messengers a command to kill David. So the high priest may very well have been apprised of this, and seen David apparently fleeing, traveling light, without many people with him. And Ahimelech probably thought, uh-oh, this may be the day that David has to run for his life, and now I'm going to be in a position to have to help him or not help him, and rather not be in that position, since I'm going to have to either side with David or with the king.

And probably his sympathies were with David, but it was much safer politically to side with the king. So David said to Ahimelech the priest, The king has ordered me on some business, and said to me, Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you, or what I have commanded you, and I have directed my young men to such and such a place. Okay, so David might have actually been literally alone, and there might in fact have been some young men that he was going to meet, because, I mean, there's a lot that goes on that's not recorded.

David had three days waiting for Jonathan to bring back message from the Feast of the New Moon. David may have, during that time, done some communicating with people who were friends and loyalists, and told them, you know, I'm going to probably have to run, if I do meet me at such and such a place. I mean, there's a sense in which, of course, he's lying here to protect the priest, and maybe to protect himself too.

But there may be truth in the fact that there were young men, that is loyalists to David who would stand with him, who he had directed them to meet him somewhere, if they weren't with him at this time. Now, therefore, what have you on hand? Give me five loaves of bread in my hand, or whatever can be found. So, even if there were people with him, there weren't very many.

He only needed five loaves of bread provisions. That wouldn't be for a very large company. And the priest answered David and said, There is no common bread on hand, but there is the holy bread, if the young men have at least kept themselves from women.

And David answered the priest and said to him, Truly, women have been kept from us about three days since I came out. That was true of him, anyway. He had been three days away from his home, from his wife.

The holy bread, of course, was the show bread. The show bread was twelve loaves of bread that would be set out every week on the Sabbath, and then eaten by the priests and replaced each week with fresh bread. It was a ceremonial thing.

The priest didn't have to eat it in order to stay alive. They had plenty of food from other sources, from sacrifices and tithes and such. The priest eating the holy bread was just really a ceremony, rather than something that really sustained them.

And yet, David was not a priest, or the people who were with him were not priests, and therefore they should not eat that bread. Under the law, it was not permissible for anyone but the priest to eat it. So, the priest says, Well, I'll make an exception in your case, as long as we can say something special qualifies you.

Let's just say you guys have been celibate for the last few days, you know. Or you've stayed away from women. Now, this is not saying that celibacy is a virtue in marriage.

David was a married man, and probably a lot of his soldiers were married men. But, not that it would be wrong to be with their women, but like when God was giving the law at Mount Sinai, he told Moses to tell the people to come not near their wives for three days, as they prepared themselves for the holy meeting with God. So, even though there's nothing unholy about intimate relations between a husband and a wife, there are times when, just for spiritual reasons, you separate yourself from those things in order to focus on things less physical, more spiritual.

And Paul says that in 1 Corinthians 7, too. He says that a husband and wife should not

deny each other of that kind of intimacy. He says, except for an agreed upon short period of time for prayer and fasting.

And after that, he says, come together again so that the devil will not tempt you for your incontinence. But, the idea is there might be times when a husband and wife would decide to abstain for a while for prayer and fasting. So, even though there's really nothing unclean, and the Bible makes that clear.

It says in the 13th chapter of Hebrews, it says marriage is honorable among all and the bed is undefiled. So, there's nothing really wrong with that. It's just that there's times, there's nothing wrong with eating either.

But, if you're fasting, you're depriving yourself of things that are not in themselves wrong, but you're depriving yourself for the sake of focusing on something more spiritual and basically denying your body certain pleasures that apparently might distract you or interfere with your focus. So, here the priest was trying to find some way to make people who weren't priests at least a little bit qualified to eat the holy bread. And thought, well, maybe if they've done something unusually spiritual, like not slept with their wives or something like that, then we could maybe call that a special circumstance and we'll give them the bread.

So, David said, yeah, that's how it's been. We haven't seen our women for three days. And he says, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in effect common, even though it was sanctified in the vessel this day.

Now, it's not clear what David means by that. He might mean that, well, actually, it's very unclear what he means by that. He might simply mean that the young men have not defiled themselves, not become unclean.

But when he says that the bread is in a sense common, in effect it's common, even though it was sanctified, hard to know what he means by that. He might simply mean this, that all bread is just bread. And even though this is sanctified bread, bread is for people to eat.

And therefore all bread is bread. All bread is common, really, when it comes down to it. It's a little bit like when Paul was talking about eating meat sacrificed to idols.

A lot of Christians had some superstitious ideas that it was dangerous to eat meat sacrificed to idols, spiritually dangerous. And Paul said, well, an idol isn't anything at all. Eating meat sacrificed to idols is just ordinary meat.

There's nothing going on there that you should be afraid of. He said, however, you shouldn't do it if it's going to stumble somebody. The only danger in it is that somebody might have their conscience defiled and end up doing something that they don't believe they should do, and therefore sinning against their own conscience.

But apart from that, the food is just ordinary food. The fact that it's been sacrificed to idols might make it different in the mind of somebody and therefore make it a sin for them to eat it if they think it's wrong. But it's just food.

All food's the same. Food's for the belly, and the belly's for food. And God will destroy both it and them, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6, when he was talking about this subject.

So David might mean that. He says all bread is really just bread. The bread is, in effect, common, even if it was sanctified.

That's probably his meaning. So the priest gave him holy bread, for there was no bread there but the show bread, which had been taken from before the Lord, in order to put hot bread in its place on the day when it was taken away. Now, again, this is all told as if David is alone.

But Jesus refers to this in Matthew 12, this story, and the Pharisees criticized the disciples for it. But notice what Jesus said in verse 3. Now, Jesus was certainly familiar with the story. And twice he mentions those who were with David when he ate the show bread.

Now, they may have been with him right there, visible to the priest, or they may have been waiting for him somewhere else. They were with him in the sense that they were on his side, and he was bringing food to them. I mean, the show bread apparently was eaten by others besides David on this occasion.

It was not lawful for him or those who were with him to eat, but they did. So, there are others involved with David at this point that we don't know about. We have not read about them, but Jesus knew of them and mentioned them.

So, we have to assume that somewhere along the line, in some of the gaps not recorded for us, David has been in communication with some of the people he trusted most. And they were either with him as he fled, or else they were at some rendezvous point that he had agreed to meet them at. And when he went to the priest, he was either completely alone or with only a few people, maybe completely alone, but he was getting... He made it very clear he was getting food for other people too.

He said, the men who were with me, they were clean, they haven't been near women, and so forth. So, the idea is that he was... the priest was giving food to David and others. How many others, we don't know.

Now, with reference to this particular event, Jesus, of course, is making an important point to the Pharisees. And that is that David broke the law. Now, the disciples, when they picked grain and rubbed it in their hands, also apparently broke the law, because Jesus compared it with David, who broke the law.

Many people say, especially those who believe that Sabbath-keeping is still a Christian obligation, they say that Jesus' disciples here did not really break the Sabbath. They didn't really break the law. They only violated the Pharisees' interpretation, or the Pharisees' traditions about the Sabbath.

And that would seemingly be a good and legitimate statement to make, because it hardly seems likely that God would oppose someone picking one head of grain and rubbing it. That's hardly hard labor. However, the law had never really stated what constitutes labor on the Sabbath.

The law said you should do all your work on six days, and then do no work, do no common work on the seventh day. Apparently, picking grain could be considered work. It's not doing nothing, it's doing something.

And therefore, Jesus just took it at face value that they were breaking the Sabbath, but that didn't alarm him. Just like it didn't alarm him that David broke the showbread law. They were both cases where men were hungry, and they did something that violated ceremonial law.

Sabbath is ceremonial, so is showbread. Jesus indicated that what the disciples did was parallel to what David did. Now, David didn't break a moral law here, and neither did the disciples.

If they did, it wouldn't be parallel. If one of them did, and the other didn't. Eating showbread was a ceremonial law, not a moral law.

So, Jesus is saying that what his disciples have done is like what David did. They've broken a ceremonial law, the Sabbath. Now, on other occasions, when the Pharisees were simply criticizing the disciples for breaking a tradition, Jesus criticized the Pharisees for putting traditions so highly.

For example, three chapters after this in Matthew, in Matthew 15, the disciples were criticized for not washing their hands according to the Jewish traditions. And Jesus said, well, you people keep your traditions to violate the law of God. And he basically defended his disciples against the need to observe Pharisees' traditions.

But here, he didn't argue that way. He could have, if that's what he was thinking. If he's thinking, oh, you Pharisees, you're such nitpickers.

You know, you think that's a violation of the Sabbath? No, that's just a violation of your man-made rules about the Sabbath. He could have said that, but he argued entirely differently. He did not suggest that the criticism that his disciples did, what was unlawful to do on the Sabbath, was an unjust criticism or was an untrue criticism.

He just said, this is a case like David, eating the showbread. That was, in fact, a violation

of law. But there are some things more important to God than others.

And he tells us what that is as you look just a few verses further down in Matthew 12. He says in verse 7, But if you had known what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless. My disciples may, in fact, have broken the Sabbath just like David broke the showbread law, but they're guiltless.

Why? Because God's priorities are different than you think. God says he desires mercy more than sacrifice. Now, sacrifice stands for ceremonial Jewish procedures.

Sacrifices are part of the ceremonial law of Israel. And so was showbread and so was Sabbath-keeping. And so are many other laws.

They were ceremonial. And like sacrifice, God cares more about being merciful and loving and the needs of people, meeting the needs of people, than he does about being a nitpicker about rules and rituals. And that's what Jesus said.

Now, the quote Jesus is actually quoting from Hosea 6.6, and it's not the first time he did so. You know, when he says there in verse 7, If you had known what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless. They should have known because he told them earlier in chapter 9 of Matthew when they had criticized him for eating with the wrong kind of people.

Tax collectors and sinners. And in Matthew 9 and verse 13, Jesus had told them, go and learn what this means. I desire mercy and not sacrifice.

So, he tells them they need to learn the meaning of Hosea 6.6 where God said, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. He told them, go and learn what it means. They didn't.

And so when they made the mistake in chapter 12, he said, you should have known what this means. If you had known what this means, you wouldn't have made this stupid mistake of condemning innocent people. Now, what does it mean? What it means, of course, is there are weightier and less weightier matters of the law.

Jesus said that also in Matthew 23.23 when he's criticizing the Pharisees. In Matthew 23.23, he said, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law. So, paying tithes is not one of the weightier matters of the law.

It, too, is ceremonial. Because the tithe was to support the temple system. The tithe was to support the Levites to run the temple and the sacrifices.

It was all part of the ritual law. It's how the ritual law was maintained through tithing. It was required.

It was a law. The Jews were required to do it. But it was not one of the weightier matters

in God's eyes.

What was? He says, you've neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith or faithfulness, the word can be translated. These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone. In other words, you should have kept the ceremonial law as you did, but more importantly, you should have kept the weightier matters of the law.

Things that matter more to God than that. Like being a just person, being a merciful person, being a faithful person. Those things are things that matter a lot more to God than whether you pay your tithes or keep the Sabbath or, you know, eat the showbread or don't eat the showbread properly.

You know, these rituals are not what God is excited about. He said, I will have mercy rather than sacrifice. And Jesus said, you should have learned what that meant, you Pharisees, because you don't condemn David.

That's what he's pointing out. Why do you condemn my disciples? David did the same kind of thing. Why don't you condemn him? He's saying you're judging by a double standard.

You let David get away with stuff because he's your hero, and you criticize my disciples for doing essentially the same kind of thing. You have not learned where God's heart is. God's heart is not about the rituals and the cleanness and uncleanness of the ceremonies and so forth.

It's about people. These people are hungry, and you won't let them eat because it's the Sabbath day. Well, God lets them eat, and therefore, don't condemn them.

They're guiltless. Now, so this time where David and his men, who were not priests, ate the bread that was only ceremonially available to the priests, this was something no one ever criticized David for. No later part of Scripture, God doesn't take David to task for this somehow later on.

The Pharisees themselves didn't even take him to task. They gave him a pass on this. And so Jesus says, well, then you're already recognizing a case where God had mercy on people and did not require a strict adherence to the ceremonial law.

So why change your policy here with my disciples? Now, all this transpired, again, verses 1 through 6, where this whole transaction happened between David and the priest, there's no suggestion necessarily that the men that David had with him were really with him there. He actually told the priest that he had told them to meet him somewhere further on. So very possibly he was alone at this time.

But Jesus did mention there were those with him, which may well be, like I said, with him



in the sense that they were going to rendezvous with him. They were not apart from him in the sense of he was not leaving them behind. They were going with him.

And he had food for them that he got from the priest. Now, a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord. Detained before the Lord means he had to, for some reason he had to be there at the tabernacle.

He might have been detained there by guard duty. He may have been just one of the military men, a servant of Saul. They may have had to have some guards at the tabernacle from time to time to protect from marauders and thieves and things like that.

And so he was on retainer. He was detained there before the Lord at the tabernacle. And he was named Doeg.

He was an Edomite. He was not Jewish. He was of the enemy but apparently had come to be a mercenary in Saul or maybe a convert to Judaism and serving in Saul's administration.

He was the chief of the herdsmen who belonged to Saul. And David said to Ahimelech, the priest, Is there not here on hand a spear or a sword? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. Now, this must have sounded like a pretty hokey story.

David is the leader of the military. He is leading all the raids on the Philistines on a regular basis. But he left home without a sword.

I was in a hurry. You went on an expedition, a special important expedition for the king, and you were too much in a hurry to pick up your sword as you left the house? You know, it's not very likely. It's likely that Ahimelech knew.

I mean, this all may have been going on with a wink and a nod between these two men. I mean, I can't tell you what I'm really doing because then you'd be in trouble. I know.

I don't want to know what you're doing. So just, you know, we'll just go through this charade. You're on the king's business, and that's all you've told me, and I'm just helping you out on your mission to the king.

I mean, Ahimelech knew very well that David's life was in danger, maybe not at this very moment, but he knew that Saul was persecuting David. So the fact that David shows up alone without a sword, it's looking pretty suspicious. And Ahimelech just goes along with it in any case.

The priest said, the sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, there it is, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you'll take that, take it, for there is no other except that one here. And David said, there's none like it.

Give it to me. I wonder how big this sword was that David dragged around with him as he was running. We know that Goliath's spear, the shaft, it was like a weaver's beam, and the head of the spear was 15 pounds of whatever it was, lead or steel or iron or something.

That guy had big weapons. I can just imagine the size of his sword. And David said, oh, there's no sword like that anywhere.

I'll take that. But he's got to carry it with him. I would think it would drag on the ground if he had it on his belt, probably to strap it across his back or something, because it was huge.

Then David arose and fled that day from before Saul and went to Achish, the king of Gath. Now, Achish is a Philistine king. David is really taking a chance here by going among the Philistines.

He's hoping to have shelter there because the Philistines are enemies of Saul. And so he figures Saul won't pursue him into the Philistine towns. David's the only one brave enough to go into there to attack the Philistines.

Saul wouldn't do it. So David is hoping to be unrecognized. Now, I'm not sure how you'd be unrecognized in a small town with a six foot long sword strapped to your back.

Who knows what he did, but he he was hoping to be discreet, I'm sure. And his red hair, of course, to draw attention to himself, he'd be easy to spot. And the servants of Achish said to him, is this not David, the king of the land? Interesting, they called David the king of the land.

They must have known that Saul's position was threatened by David, too. Who knows how much intelligence was out there that the Philistines were gathering in the Israelite land. And, you know, they knew that David was interesting.

They call him the king of the land. Did they not sing of him to one another and dance and sing? Saul has slain thousands and David is ten thousands. Now, Achish apparently hadn't paid much attention to David.

And we don't know on what pretext David had arrived, saying, maybe I'm running from Saul or what. If he said he was running from Saul, he could easily have simply sought sanctuary there among the Philistines and had their sympathy. The trouble is, David had killed lots of the Philistines.

In fact, he's carrying the sword of a man of Gath on his back that he cut his head off. This is the sword on his back with which he cut off Goliath's head, who was the champion of the people of Gath. He was Goliath of Gath.

This is the town that Goliath came from. It's not exactly going to endear you to the people there, but you're carrying around the trophy of your victory over their favorite son that you killed. And yet David, I guess he was desperate and didn't feel like he had a lot of choices.

Now, David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish, the king of Gath. So he changed his behavior before them, feigned madness in their hands. Now, in their hands sounds like it may be that they had actually taken him into custody.

Because of the counsel of these men talking to King Achish, it may be that they had actually put him in prison and he was in their hands in that sense. Or maybe in their hands as a figure of speech just means that he was in their territory. It says, he scratched on the doors of the gate and let his saliva fall down his beard.

So he drooled and acted like a madman. And Achish said to his servants, look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me? Have I indeed need of madmen that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house? So David actually was let go and left from there.

There's a couple of Psalms that were written by David at this very time. If you look over at Psalm 34, one of the finest of the Psalms, and Psalm 56, both of them were written by David on this occasion. Psalm 34, in the Psalm title, it says the Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech who drove him away and he departed.

Now it says Abimelech, whereas in Samuel it says Achish. But there is reason to believe that the kings of the Philistine towns were called Abimelech, just like the kings of Egypt were all called Pharaoh. Because remember when Abraham lived in the land, he had interaction with the kings of the Philistines in Gerar, another Philistine city.

And the king was called Abimelech. And then a generation later, Isaac had some dealings with the king of Gerar, the Philistine king there, and his name was Abimelech too. And now this Achish, who is the king of Gath, is referred to as Abimelech.

So, scholars have suggested that Abimelech may well be not so much a personal name as a name for a title. A title for the head of state in the Philistine cities. Again, comparable to Pharaoh being the name of all the kings of Egypt.

They're all called Pharaoh. So anyway, we can see that Psalm 34 was written at this time. And I'd like to read that psalm, but I also want to show you the title of Psalm 56.

It says, To the chief musician set to the silent dove in distant lands. Now, that means the tune of this well-known song in those days called the Silent Dove of Distant Lands. It's a Mishtem of David when the Philistines captured him in Gath.

Now, this is the time it's talking about. And notice it says they captured him. Now,

whether they had literally put him in prison and he got released because he scratched on the doors and drooled like a madman.

And they just thought, well, what the heck, let's get rid of him. Or whether they had him, you know, they captured him in the sense that he was within the city. And they could have locked him in if they wished.

But in Psalm 34, David said, I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the Lord.

The humble shall hear of it and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together. Now, this is written after he departed from Gath.

That's what the Psalm title says. After he'd feigned madness and they let him go. I guess he was afraid there, but he was feeling relieved when he left.

And he wrote this very upbeat, really, this upbeat song. He says, I sought the Lord and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears. They looked at him and were radiant and their faces were not ashamed.

This poor man cried out and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear him and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.

Blessed is the man who trusts in him. Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints. There is no want to those who fear him.

The young lions lack and suffer hunger, but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing. Come, you children, listen to me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

Who is the man who desires life and loves many days that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking guile. Strange thing to suggest when he had just practiced guile to deceive Achish. Maybe he's saying that's why I'm not seeing good days.

If you want to see good days, refrain from speaking guile. I'm having to live by my guile right now. These are not good days particularly.

I'm on the run. Depart from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it.

That verse, by the way, is quoted in the New Testament in 1 Peter as instructions to Christians. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. No doubt he has Saul in mind here because it's Saul who's driven him into this extremity. And Saul, in fact, would be cut off

from remembrance from the earth.

Both he and his sons would be killed and that'd be the end of his dynasty. The righteous cry out and the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart and save such as have a contrite spirit.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He guards all his bones. Not one of them is broken.

Evil shall slay the wicked and those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. The Lord redeems the soul of his servants and none of those who trust in him shall be condemned. So again, strong expressions of faith in God at a time when there's not much to encourage a man.

He's running for his life. He's away from his wife. He's away from his country.

He's in a foreign land among his enemies. He fears them. He has to fake madness to get away from them safely.

And now he's on the other side of their walls outside and he writes this psalm about how God delivers them. Many are the afflictions of the righteous but the Lord delivers them out of them all. God is near to those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

These verses, a lot of them are really popular, familiar verses. It's kind of interesting to know the circumstances in which they were written. Likewise, Psalm 56, written also on the same occasion.

Only, it may be that he wrote it when he was, before he was released. Psalm 34 is written when he departed. When Abimelech drove him away and he departed.

So he was free from Gath when he wrote Psalm 34. And you can tell, he's got a lot of positive things to say. In this one, he may not have been free yet.

He may have been in fact either locked up or at least confined within the city. Because it says he wrote this when the Philistines captured him in Gath. Not when he escaped, not when he left.

So he may have written this psalm while he was there. Now you might say, how could he write these psalms in prison? He probably composed them mentally and wrote them down later on. I'm sure he was, like Richard Wurmbrandt.

When he was in the Romanian prison for 14 years, he wrote sermons and memorized them and he preached them to himself. He said every day he wrote a sermon and preached it to himself. He didn't have paper and pencil, he did it mentally and he memorized it.

And then he wrote them down when he got out of prison years later. He had memorized them that much. So I guess if you're locked up without a lot of television and internet to keep you occupied, you can be creative and memorize stuff.

David probably wrote these in his head first. And they probably reflected the prayers that he was spontaneously praying but put to poetry. And then later on, when it was convenient, he wrote them down.

You can see that he's somewhat in more trouble when he writes 56 than when he wrote 34. It says, Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up. Fighting all day, he oppresses me.

My enemies would hound me all day. For there are many who fight against me, O Most High. Whenever I'm afraid, I will trust in you.

In God I will praise his word. In God I have put my trust. I will not fear.

What can flesh do to me? This is something that Hebrews 13 tells us we can say confidently. When he says be confident because the Lord has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. He says, therefore, we can confidently say, The Lord is with me.

I will not fear. What can men do to me? If God is for you, what can men do to you? All day they twist my words. All their thoughts are against me for evil.

Now who they are, it's no doubt Saul and those who are the psychopathic followers of Saul who just kind of are the yes men. They're always twisting David's words. Probably always Saul in conference with those who were with him.

And when he talked about David, no doubt people found it convenient to twist David's words and try to make all the loyal things David had done to be out really evil things. And so it probably would have been politically expeditious if you're around the king to find ways to help justify his paranoia, to help justify his chasing David and therefore to try to find fault with David. And he says, they twist my words.

All their thoughts are against me for evil. They gather together. They hide.

They mark my steps when they lie and wait for my life. Shall they escape by iniquity and anger cast down the peoples? Oh, God, you number my wanderings. Put my tears into your bottle.

Are they not in your book? When I cry out to you, then my enemies will turn back. This I know because God is for me. In God, I will praise his word.

In the Lord, I will praise his word. In God, I have put my trust. I will not be afraid.

What can man do to me? Vows made to you are binding upon me, oh God. I will render

praise to you for you have delivered my soul from death. Have you not delivered my feet from falling that I may walk before God in the light of the living? So he talks about his crying, about his brokenheartedness and so forth in both of these psalms.

So he was pretty depressed while he was fleeing in Gath, and those psalms were written at that time. Let's look at 1 Samuel 22 here. David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adulam.

And when his brothers in all his father's house heard of it, they went down there to him. Probably a good idea because if Saul couldn't catch David, he could go arrest his father and brothers and hold them on the threat that if David doesn't turn himself in, his father's going to suffer for it or his brothers. So when David's a refugee, his father and brothers have to hide out too so that they don't get caught.

So they came down to this cave of Adulam. By the way, there was a psalm written at that time too while he was in the cave. Psalm 142.

I don't know how much time we can really give to this, but it's very short. It's only seven verses. But Psalm 142 says a contemplation of David, a prayer when he was in the cave.

And he said, I cry out to the Lord with my voice. With my voice to the Lord, I make my supplication. I pour out my complaint before him.

I declare before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then you knew my path and the way in which I walk. They have secretly set a snare for me.

Look on my right hand and see, for there is no one who acknowledges me. Refuge has failed me. No one cares for my soul.

I cried out to you, O Lord. I said, you are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low.

Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise your name. The righteous shall surround me, and you shall deal bountifully with me. Again, all these prayers, almost all of them in the Psalms, they begin with complaints and they end up with a positive, optimistic statement.

The righteous shall surround me, and you shall deal bountifully with me. He comes around to saying, okay, now that I've whined a little bit, I'll just express my confidence that you're going to make things better, and you will. So that he wrote at this time.

Also 57. 57 also? I didn't have that one written down. I didn't realize that.

Yeah, Psalm 57 also. Oh yeah, that's even more explicit. I'd like to read that too, just because I think reading these Psalms puts us inside the head of David a little more.

Psalm 57 is set to the song, Do Not Destroy. We already saw another song set to that tune. Must have been a limited number of tunes available.

A misstem of David when he fled from Saul into the cave. Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for my soul trusts in you, and in the shadow of your wings I will make my refuge until these calamities have passed by. I will cry out to God most high, to God who performs all things for me.

He shall send from heaven and save me. He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

My soul is among lions. I lie among the sons of men who are set on fire, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and let your glory be above all the earth.

They have prepared a net for my steps. My soul is bowed down. They have dug a pit before me.

Into the midst of it they themselves have fallen. My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast. I will sing and give praise.

Awake, my glory, awake, lute and harp. I will awaken at the dawn. I will praise you, O Lord, among the peoples.

I will sing to you among the nations. For your mercy reaches into the heavens and your truth under the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and let your glory be over all the earth.

We sing it that way. And so, again, David keeping rather upbeat in the midst of his fears and his disasters, still praising God from the cave instead of from the palace where he had been living before. Now his brother and fathers went down to meet him, father and brothers, and everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him.

So he became captain over them, and there were about 400 men with him. Now, one has to wonder, how did these people find him? I mean, he's hiding so that Saul and his armies can't find him. How do 400 men locate him when he's hiding in a cave? He must have sent out messengers to trusted people that he knew.

He must have sent messengers, first of all, to his father and his brothers, and said, here's where you can find me. And then there may have been quite a few other people. Since David commanded a thousand men, there may easily have been 400 of them that he knew he could count on with his very life, and who'd rather be with him than with Saul.



So he probably said to his father and brothers or someone, go out and discreetly find these people and let them know where they can find me. Because obviously it would not be easy to find him while he's hiding. But they came to him, and the people who came to him were people who were in distress, in debt, and discontented.

Discontented probably with Saul's leadership, in debt for whatever reasons, we don't know. But people who had problems and were discontented in the present mainstream of society in Israel at that time, they thought they'd thrown their lot with somebody who was a leader they would suffer with. I mean, they were going to have to leave their homes and hide.

And if Saul caught up with David, he'd kill all those who were with him. So these people were loyal to the point of, you know, putting their money where their mouth is and being willing to suffer with David. Which is interesting because we do read of Saul that he loved David when he first met him.

When David played the harp, it calmed his spirit, and Saul loved David. And then we read that Jonathan loved David. Now we don't read that these people loved David, but more than Saul or Jonathan, these people really stick their necks out and lay their lives down for David.

So I mean, their love is not all talk. Their love is not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Jonathan loved David truly.

Saul, obviously, much more conditionally. But these people, you know, obviously they showed their love for him by just taking their whole lives in their hands to be with him, to support him. Then David went from there to Mizpah of Moab.

And he said to the king of Moab, please let my father and mother come here with you till I know what God will do for me. His father, of course, Jesse, was the grandson of Boaz, a Moabite. I'm not, Ruth, a Moabite.

Boaz was a Bethlehemite. Ruth was a Moabite. And so Jesse was her grandson.

He was part Moabite himself, as David was. So he went to the Moabites and to the king there and thought maybe if there's any safe place outside of Israel, it'll be where our ancestors, some of our ancestors have been in the past. So he trusted the king of Moab to be fair to his family more than he trusted the king of Israel to be.

So it's tragic that sometimes unbelievers can be more trustworthy than God's people are. So he brought them before the king of Moab and they dwelt with him all the time that David was in the stronghold. The stronghold is not really a fortress.

It's a mountainous area that David spent a lot of time in running around, hiding from Saul. Then the prophet Gad said to David, do not stay in the stronghold. Depart and go

to the land of Judah.

The stronghold was apparently in the land of Moab or near the land of Moab or perhaps in Transjordan where it was safer. And Gad, who's a prophet we've not heard of previously but became one of the three prophets that David had association with, was apparently with him and said, no, God wants you to go into the land of Judah, not stay out here in the stronghold. So David departed and went into the forest of Herod.

And when Saul heard that David and his men who were with him had been discovered, now Saul was staying in Gibeah under a tamarisk tree in Ramah. He spends a lot of time sitting under trees, it seems like. With his spear in his hand and all his servants standing about him, then Saul said to his servants who stood about him, hear now, you Benjamites.

Because Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin and apparently through nepotism had given most of his positions of authority to other Benjamites, probably relatives of his. He said, hear now, you Benjamites. Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards and make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds? All of you have conspired against me and there is no one who reveals to me that my son has made a covenant with the son of Jesse.

And there is not one of you who is sorry for me or reveals to me that my son has stirred up my servants against me to lie in wait as it is this day. Now, of course, this is just paranoia talking. No one was lying in wait for Saul.

David was not lying in wait for him. David was running from him. Saul just had to justify his paranoid anger by making it sound like he was in danger and acting in self-defense.

Then answered Doeg, the Edomite, who was sent over the servants of Saul and said, I saw the son of Jesse go to Nab, to Ahimelech, the son of Ahitab. And he inquired of the Lord for him, gave him provisions and gave him the sword of Goliath, the Philistine. Then the king sent to call Ahimelech.

Now, this is an awful thing because, of course, this ended up in the death of the priest. And this betrayal, this treachery of Doeg is commemorated in a psalm that David wrote, Psalm 52, which says, A contemplation of David when Doeg, the Edomite, went and told Saul and said to him, David has gone out of the house, gone to the house of Ahimelech. So this is basically a psalm cursing Doeg, Psalm 52.

We won't take the time to read it now because we don't have the time, but just so you'll know. Now back to 1 Samuel 22, 11. Then the king sent to call Ahimelech, the priest, the son of Ahitab, and all his father's house, the priests who were at Nab.

And they all came to the king. And Saul said, Here now, son of Ahitab. And he answered, Here I am, my lord.

Then Saul said to him, Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me to lie in wait as it is this day? So Ahimelech answered the king and said, And who among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, who goes at your bidding and is honorable in all your house? Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? Was this the first time I did that? Why do I inquire of God for him all the time? Is this like the first time? Why are you getting upset about it for this time? Far be it from me. Let not the king impute anything to his servant or to any in the house of my father. For your servant knew nothing of all this, little or much.

And the king said, You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house. Then the king said to the guards who stood about him, Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled and did not tell me. But the servants of the king would not lift their hands to strike the priests of the Lord.

And the king said to Doeg, You, turn and kill the priests. So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests and killed on that day 85 men who wore a linen ephod. Now you might wonder how 85 men would stand there and wait for one man to come and kill them.

And it's hard to know what you'd do in a case like that. I mean, you'd think they'd run, they'd fight back or something. I mean, but they also knew that if they ran, the armies of Israel would hunt them down and kill them anyway.

I mean, it's like the king has decreed your death. What are you going to do? You just have to bear the neck and go down because there's not really much else you can do. 85 men stood there and got killed by this one jerk, Doeg.

And so, also Nob, the city of the priests, he struck with the edge of the sword both men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and donkeys and sheep with the edge of the sword. Notice he treated the whole city of Nob, which is a priest city, as if it was Jericho or Canaanite city. Now one of the sons of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitab, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David.

And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the Lord's priests. So David said to Abiathar, I knew that day when Doeg the Edomite was there that he would surely tell Saul, I have caused the death of all the persons of your father's house. Stay with me, do not fear, for he who seeks my life seeks your life, but with me you shall be safe.

So, the one surviving priest. This is the last surviving son of Eli. This is the house of Eli.

You remember that a man of God had said to Eli back in chapter 2 of 1 Samuel that God would cut off the house of Eli and there wouldn't be an old man among his seed and that he'd replace him with another priest, a more righteous priest. This actually happened

because this Abiathar was removed from office later by Solomon and Zadok was put in his place. So anyway, this is how the curse on Eli's family came to be fulfilled in this tragic injustice where these innocent priests were killed by this evil man, an evil king.

Well, we're going to have to stop there.